

# RESTORATION

Vol. V.

COMBERMERE, ONTARIO—DECEMBER, 1951

No. 1.

## Our Christmas Prayer Is To You And For You

By Dorothy Phillips

Winter visited us with an eight-inch fall of snow. It may not stay very long; but while it remains it is beautiful. Wish you could see the early sun striking the trees—and them covered with the soft new snow.

Far from making us dread what the cold portends, the weather has given us a fore-runner of the magnificent spectacles of nature that God will be displaying to us in the next few months.

### That Christmas Party

Here at Madonna House we are joyously aware of the coming of the Infant Christ. The boxes and parcels sent in by so many kind people have started arriving. The happiness of opening them, and of sorting articles for our Children's Christmas Party, has become part of our daily routine.

As each parcel reveals its secret we contemplate, with deep gratitude to our donors, what joy their generosity will bring to the boys and girls around us.

It is difficult to describe the hushed excitement in our parish hall just before the presents are distributed. As each child receives his gift a new note of glee is added to the increasing volume of sound—which soon reaches the tempo of a mighty symphony.

The peak is reached with excited cries as the children admire their gifts, and compare them with their neighbors'. The parents' voices form the base. As the pitch rises, so does it die—until the last musical goodbye is sung, and the drum-beat of the closing door is heard no longer.

Then silence. A wondrous silence! May it not be broken this year by the weeping of any little boy or girl who may have been missed, through some terrible accident, when Santa was giving out the toys.

### Sad Need of Toys

The crying of a neglected child at a Christmas party can get under your skin quicker, can stay there longer, and can hurt harder, than almost anything else. We realize that. And, if we did not have such abundant trust in God, in His holy mother, and in the angels and the saints who look after the little ones, we might be frightened. For, so far, we have received very few toys.

We have not nearly enough to go around! Not yet. But we know you will not forget. December is such a wonderful month. Not only are we blessed with thoughts of the coming of Christ, but we

are also reminded of the Immaculate Conception.

We rejoice, too, because a number of young men and women close to Madonna House have planned to consecrate themselves this Dec. 8th, after the St. Grignon de Montfort fashion, as slaves to the Queen of Queens.

What a day that will be for them! And what a Christmas they will enjoy!

Mary born without stain! One person only, in this world, was worthy to be the Mother of God. On her, and on her answer to the angel of the Lord, depended the fate of mankind. O Mary, conceived without sin, why should we not all be slaves

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## "Little White Church" Burnt S.O.S! S.O.S!

The Church of the Sacred Heart, "the little white church beside the blue Madawaska," was destroyed by fire Sunday morning, Nov. 11th.

Despite everything that a hastily organized bucket brigade could accomplish, the fire burned fiercely down to the cement foundations. It was impossible to save anything except the Blessed Sacrament, encased in the monstrance, the ciborium and the chalice, the stations of the cross, a few statues, and a number of prayer books that had been left in the pews.

Everything else was lost in the flames, the altar stone, the big crucifix, the beautiful red altar carpet the Ladies' Guild worked so long and so hard to procure, the organ, the statue of the Sacred Heart over the main altar, and all the vestments of the priest.

The pastor, Father A. P. Dwyer, had just finished Benediction after High Mass, and was saying the praises, when he smelled smoke in the sacristy, and heard the crackling of the flames. He told the congregation there was a fire, and bade them leave quietly. By the time they had reached the outside, flames were bursting through the roof.

The priest's home, a few feet away from the fire, was saved by desperate work, and by prayers.

We are desolate here in Combermere, and stricken. We loved our church so much! It was so humble, so inviting, so home-like, so intimate. And we must build another. We hear now, clearly, the voice St. Francis of Assisi heard, "Build up My church!" Will you help us? Will you send us anything you can spare? Make all cheques payable to Father Dwyer, Combermere, Ont., and God bless you beyond all telling!

## PIUS XII BLESSES F. H. AND ALL ITS FRIENDS!!

By Catherine Doherty

It happened! The impossible, that is. The impossible, the incredible. I HAD A PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH HIS HOLINESS.

There were, it is true, in the huge room, several other people — three couples and a priest. We stood far apart, and the pope spoke to each one of us in turn. Privately. Intimately. Benignly. Like a father to his children.

There was in his face such love, such understanding, such interest, that I felt absolutely alone with him, and that — how incredible — he WAS interested in ME and what I had to say, what I said so haltingly at first, and so easily as his questions emboldened me.

### Still At Sea

Even now, as I write this — on a liner that pitches and rolls in rather heavy seas — I do not understand how it is that I got there.

Castle Gondolfo is perched high on an Italian hill, and surrounded by the most beautiful gardens I have ever caught a glimpse of — looking through a window almost six feet high. It was there His Holiness received me.

Yes, he received me an unknown apostle of Catholic Action, from the Harlems of America and the rural areas of Canada. They seemed so far away that day, when I walked up . . . up . . . the beautifully curved marble stairway, and on through the many rooms of that lovely palace filled with priceless treasures, age-old tapestries, and paintings by many masters.

Were those truly my footsteps that echoed so loudly through those immense halls? Was it I who stood finally, trembling and awed, in the long wide room where the pope was to hold his audiences? I KNOW IT WAS. But — how did I get there?

### The Least Of These

My saintly Bishop, the Most Reverend William J. Smith, of the Diocese of Pembroke, Ontario, who had delegated me officially to the Congress of Catholic Action Leaders, had also graciously given me a letter to the Papal Secretary of State, Monsignor Montini, asking that a papal interview be granted me. Yet he warned me I might not get it, for there would be many ahead of me. And there were.

Thousands of such letters, as the bishop had written, were on the desk of that busy Monsignor when the 1,200 delegates gathered.

Among these delegates were holy people, great people, important people, men and women who had accomplished immense apostolic tasks for the glory of God and His Church. Surely, in such a crowd, I was less than the least.

Yet I was doubly honored — first, by having a long interview with the Papal Secretary, the same Monsignor Montini. He, it is said, is the busiest man in Rome. Nevertheless he found time graciously to show a deep

interest in our humble apostolate of Friendship House. He also was responsible for the second great honor, the private audience with His Holiness.

This tremendous event took place on October 15th, 1951, at 10.45 a.m., the very day when I was leaving Rome. Strangely enough it marked the twenty-first anniversary of the founding of Friendship House, in Toronto. October 15th is the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, my old and beloved friend.

### Never To Be Forgotten

Forever, now, that day, that year, that hour, will be etched in my soul! Forever I will remember every second of it. Forever I will see every detail of it.

I stood in the long room, by an immense window, trembling with joy and awe. Ever since my childhood I have had a deep love for the Holy See — a love that made me pray daily for each representative of Christ, and very specially, in the past years, for the present pope. Somehow, I almost could feel the heavy load of the world's ills pressing on his slender shoulders.

Now . . . in a few instants I was going to see HIM!!

Tears dimmed my eyes. I started to say my Rosary to give myself some courage, for I felt sure I would not be able to speak a word. Love and respect would make me speechless.

Dimly, as in a dream, I noticed the blueness of the sky outside, the patches of sunshine on the intricate design of the floor, the chamberlains moving swiftly and silently to and fro, the Monsignori in vivid colors hovering by a closed door.

Then, suddenly the door opened, and a slender figure in white walked into the room. There was a radiance about him that filled the enormous room, and seemed to fill my heart — and stop it.

### The Pope!

#### Always In His Heart

He talked to the first couple . . . then to the second . . . then to the priest. And then it was my turn! He asked my name . . . where I was born. Oh, I was Russian-Polish! And a delegate to the Congress. I represented Friendship House of the U.S.A. and Canada. We worked, I managed to say,

with the Negroes, and also in the Rural Apostolate.

He repeated, "The Negroes in America."

His hand went to his heart and bending his face a little to one side, he said again "The Negroes . . . the Negroes in America! They are always in my heart . . . I pray for them much . . . always."

A second of silence, and then more questions about our Canadian Apostolate . . . and words of praise for it.

Then with a slight inclination of the head, the pope stepped backwards . . . and, opening his arms wide in the well-known gesture, he spoke again.

"I will bless, through you, now all who belong to you, all who work in your apostolate everywhere, also all who ever did work in it, and all who ever shall, all those who help it and especially those who help the Negroes in America."

Slow, beautiful, Latin words followed. And I understood then the real meaning of the word "unctuous." That is the way those Latin words "felt." Like oil on a wound. Soothing and healing. Like wine laced with spices. Fragrant and life-giving. Like the breath of the Holy Ghost lifting a soul upward, giving it new courage to live and die for God.

As the words of the blessing flowed over my bent head, I knew myself to be privileged beyond the telling. I knew too that all the pain, all the suffering, all the darkness that had filled the long, lonely years of our apostolate had vanished, leaving but the blinding light of the graces that were ours because of it.

### Blessing For Many

It seems trite to say that I felt renewed in spirit, in strength, in love. But I did. And I also knew that every Staff Worker, Volunteer, and friend of Friendship House in the past, the present, and the future, all the good priests who stood by us and helped us, and all the members of the hierarchy who made our apostolate possible, were there at that holy moment, receiving the blessing with me. I was but a part of the whole that is Friendship House. Nothing more.

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## WHERE LOVE IS — GOD IS

The historic Congress of Catholic Action Leaders, which met in Rome in October, for seven days, bringing at least a thousand delegates from all the countries outside the Iron Curtain — and a few who had just escaped — had a tremendous program on its agenda.

It had to report on the state and works of Catholic Action in all these places—past and present, and formulate a common theme for the future.

Catholic Action has come of age. And this was vividly underlined by the very fact that His Holiness had seen fit, through the offices of the Italian Catholic Actionists, to call these leaders, and their moderators and chaplains.

His Holiness recognized its maturity by blessing it, as it were officially . . . and commissioning it publicly, so that the PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY IN THE APOSTOLATE OF THE HIERARCHY ceased to be an academic formula of definition, and became clothed with flesh — the flesh of the priesthood of Christ. The laity had long ago been ordained into this priesthood, according to its own fashion, but during that week in Rome this became more apparent than ever before.

Conference after conference, lecture after lecture, workshop after workshop, slowly, laboriously, went through the agenda. It would take volumes to report the achievements of this apostolic and immense group of the laity. But one point, one theme, emerged clearly, vividly, from every gathering, every discussion — linking the past and the present to the future.

It was a stupendous theme, yet a simple one. It brought one back to the very feet of Christ. Breaking through centuries of accumulated dust, cobwebs, and broken threads, came, with stark simplicity, the reduction of all the "being and doing" to the words "A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER."

That was the theme that bound the past to the present, the present to the future. LOVE!

All the ways of life of each group, all the techniques each had learned and applied through many years came to a focus. All of them centered in this one word that all felt was the heart of the whole matter. LOVE!

TO LEARN TO LOVE . . . GOD AND MAN . . . TO TRANSLATE THAT LOVE, THAT CARITAS, THAT CHARITY, INTO THE STREAM OF THE MINUTIAE OF DAILY LIFE . . . TO BRING, THROUGH THAT LOVE, THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPELS EVERYWHERE, ALWAYS, CONSTANTLY, WITHOUT FAILING OR FALTERING, WITHOUT COMPROMISE, AND WITHOUT WORLDLY PRUDENCE . . . WAS THE ONLY TRUE WAY THE DELEGATES FROM SEVENTY-FOUR COUNTRIES FOUND EFFECTIVE.

IT FORMED THE VERY FOUNDATION OF THE CONGRESS. IT GAVE THE VISION OF THE WHOLE A PERSPECTIVE NOTHING ELSE COULD. IT PLACED CATHOLIC ACTION ON THAT PERSONAL, NON-MASS, BASIS ON WHICH ALONE IT CAN FUNCTION EFFICIENTLY ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN.

TO LEARN HOW TO LOVE . . . AND THEN TO TEACH OTHERS TO LOVE . . . BY LOVING THEM FOR GOD'S SAKE . . . THAT AND THAT ALONE WAS THE EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE, THAT WOULD RESTORE THE WORLD TO CHRIST. THE REST WOULD BE ADDED TO IT. FOR WHERE LOVE IS . . . GOD IS . . . AND WHERE GOD IS . . . THERE IS JOY . . . PEACE . . . HAPPINESS.

It was a sublime sight to see and hear this fundamental verity proclaimed so clearly, so uncompromisingly in Rome. It was like hearing Christ Himself approve of this all-embracing fundamental theme to hear His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, make it the subject of his half-hour address to the delegates.

But it is not really necessary to attend a Congress in Rome to make this theme one's own. It is the essence of the Gospel, the heart of our Holy Faith. All Catholics must make it their own. All must begin to love God passionately, and their fellow men and brothers in Christ fully — for His sake, and their own.

FOR FAITH SHALL DIE . . . AND HOPE WITH IT . . . BUT CHARITY WILL LIVE FOR ETERNITY . . . AND IT IS SHE ALONE THAT CAN UNLOCK THE DOORS OF HEAVEN FOR EACH OF US. SHE CAN DO EVEN MORE. SHE CAN BRING HEAVEN UNTO THIS EARTH . . . TODAY!

LET US BEGIN TO LOVE . . . SO THAT WE MAY HEAL OURSELVES . . . AND THE WORLD ALL AROUND US!

## FIVE ACRE MEDITATIONS

by Eddie Doherty

Winter had not yet arrived when I returned to the Woods. But its advance men had been busy, posting great signs everywhere for those who could read them. "Coming Soon — the World's Most Terrific Winter." One saw these ads on the rocks, in the trees, in the tangled networks of little vines, in the dead stems standing in the sandy soil, in the rivulets choked with leaves. "Coming Soon — Hail, Snow, Ice, Stormy Winds which fulfill His word!"

Along The Madawaska

I was not here for this year's parade of the autumn leaves. I saw the trees change color along the Tiber and the Tagus and the Seine and the Dora and the Po. But what was that to the beauty of the trees along the Madawaska?

If there is greater beauty anywhere, if there are masses of more vivid colors, if there are more varieties of flaming hues, I have not seen them. Our fall trees rival the gaudiest dawns and sunsets. They are dawns and sunsets by themselves, waving under lesser dawns and sunsets — until their leaves have fallen and their limbs stand desolate and bare.

Sometimes it seems the woods are on fire with the warm beauty of the leaves. Then, it may be, a man's eyes fill with wonder, with excitement, and with an appreciation that is almost love. It may be also that in such moments one cannot get his breath until he notices the contrast, the divine balance, of the cool green in the pine tree, or the cedar, or the spruce.

The Frost Was Here

Leaves that had murmured softly overhead the day I left, crackled dryly, grittily, loudly, beneath my feet, the day I came back home. The clumps of golden rods and asters that were so brilliant in September had the look and the feel and the texture of dried and filthy wool. The frost had killed them early, had changed them overnight.

The towers and pinnacles of the pines, the spires of the cedars, and the steeples of the spruce and the hemlocks, contained all that was left of the beauty of the woods. The lofty elms held up great masses of black twigs and branches above their forks — a dirty lace against a cold gray sky. The poplars had been stripped of leaves — save for a few that still resisted the brutality of the wind. They clung to the top branches like the rags of flesh that hung from the back of Christ when the whips had scourged Him.

The maples and the birches were as nude and as cold and as dead as the poplar groves — or the masses of leaves that covered the moss at their roots. The moss was thick. "Coming Soon—Don't Miss It—A Real Old-Fashioned Winter."

The leaves made a sound like the surf as I walked through them; and I heard the voice of God:

"A rifle's eye sees clearly in the world I have stripped of leaves; My children must have fresh meat."

Puff Balls and Cones

The puff-balls that had been so white were black now, or a dirty brown, and the smoke came out of them even before my feet could

touch them.

The pine cones, so intricately, so marvellously made, so guarded in the Spring — the trees kept them just beneath the clouds, if you remember, and each one was precious because it had been carved by God, and each one was beautifully cared for — lay everywhere among the fallen leaves, the withered ferns, the gray bent grasses, and the faded and discolored vines. They were unlovely now. They had lost their shapes, their scent, their lacquer, even their feel of life.

The leaves made a sound like the tide pouring in on a shingly beach; and I heard the voice of God:

"I shall bring down blankets of snow to cover these cones, these seed cases of the pines, that they may mother trees next Spring. I shall cover all these growing things with snow that they may reproduce their kind. And men shall see the tracks of deer in the snow I spill. And the tracks of hares. And the tracks of many birds. My children need fresh meat."

Silky Missionaries

Half-way up a nearby hill a colony of milk weeds stood forlorn and all but lifeless. Weeks before I visited them their ripe pods had split, and the winged seeds had flown away, exulting in the autumn breezes — gauzy missionaries bent on carrying the Truth to lands too far away to see.

The outsides of the pods were stiff and cracked as old dried leather — yet the insides, which had sheltered the seeds, were satin-smooth, and soft as a mother's bosom.

The blackberry canes had lost their viciousness, their audacity, their quickness to attack. What need had they now for any kind of quarrel? Their fruit was gone. It would not come back. And there would be no new ripe berries until the next July. Besides, they were tired, and it was time for a bush to sleep. Where was that snow and ice so widely advertised?

The woods were gloomy and the skies were gray. The far hills were drab and dreary. They had lost their soft contours; they were severe and sharp. And there was no enticement in them for the curious traveller.

Yet there was a splash of loveliness here and there. The red cockades of the sumacs stood up grimly in the bleakness of the hillside — grimly and bravely. Their leaves were gone. Their limbs were thick and bare and black. But the cockades were worn as soldiers wear them, jauntily.

The Little Oaks

And the little oak trees at the foot of the hill, on the border of the sandy road, still flaunted all their leaves, and flaunted them defiantly, like crimson and gold and brown and bright-yellow, and green and orange and lavender and purple banners.

The dead leaves made the sound of a fire crackling merrily in the grate; and I heard the voice of God:

"The world is a gray cold woods today — the world that once flamed with such love of Me that I rejoiced in it. The world is a gray, cold woods—but it still gives Me the beauty of the spires

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## The B's Corner

It seems strange to write this column at sea. It seems strange to think that it has been only a month since I have seen Madonna House, Combermere, Canada. It really seems as if it were years . . . the more so that, in this short time, I have been living, be it ever so fleetingly, in LONDON, BRUSSELS, ROME, and PARIS . . . names and places men have conjured with for centuries.

Yet, would you believe it, I have been homesick for Madonna House and everyone in it . . . for Combermere, and the little white church by the blue river there, so tiny, so humble, so simple in comparison with the immense, age-old, hallowed churches of Europe.

(Poor B! She didn't know then that the Church was gone. She was heart-broken when she heard the news!)

Those Good Neighbors

I am homesick, too, for all my good neighbors in Combermere, whom I know so well and love so much. Not only for the ones in Combermere, but for all the others who dwell in the corsary of villages lost in my beloved "bush," and whose names are honey on my lips as I repeat them to myself in distant lands—Jewelville . . . Palmer Rapids . . . Raglan . . . Purdy . . . Carlow . . . Belle Rapids . . . Maynooth . . . Killaloe . . . Barry's Bay.

It seems strange that one can remember the names of unknown, hidden, little villages, so yearningly, when one is surrounded by the splendor, the glamor, the beauty of immense antique towns, whose romantic and spiritual appeal never dies! But remember them I do. And pray for them, and all the good folks living in them, even while I pray to be back among them soon.

Never before did I realize how completely I belong to the new world—I, whose roots were so firmly started, it seems, in the soil of Europe, who had been given all the advantages, of its culture, and whose soul, mind and heart bore within themselves its history.

But there it was. Plain for all to see, especially myself. The Lord had uprooted me, and set me in the garden of His new land. I belong there.

Why North America?

As I contemplated this strange new verity that came to me on this last trip, I asked myself — why? Why was I given this glimpse into my own self so vividly.

And then I knew. TO LOVE BETTER. To help others, perhaps, to love better too. For all this understanding came to me in a wide sun-drenched street in Rome, where some 1,200 delegates to the Congress of Catholic Action Leaders were discussing the whole Lay Apostolate of Catholic Action.

There was much being said . . . by many wonderful and holy people, who belonged to seventy-four nations. Some of them had travelled many thousands of miles to share their knowledge, and to gather more of it from others.

For the seven long-short days of the Congress, that often lasted far into the nights . . . men and women, who had given almost a life-

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## A Volunteer ... At Sea ...

By Mary Omanique

Admiring the wide expanse of blue on a billboard poster or in a geographic magazine is one of two ways of acquainting oneself with the Atlantic ocean. But I had to do it the hard way, by spending how many days at sea!

I can't boast of sea faring ancestry, nor even of having yearned to roam the seven seas. But, being a girl, and a rather inquisitive one, I took it upon myself to explore the ship—in an attempt to pursue the career of a merchant marquette, just for the length of our voyage.

Ready . . . Aim . . . Inquire

I had made strategic plans so I didn't waste any time getting my battery of questions in order. Although I did have some trouble deciding on the target.

While I was acquiring sea-legs I explored the upper decks, tugging at locked doors, or turning unmarked valves, sometimes with remarkable effects . . . but this was getting me nowhere. What I needed was a map . . . or . . . better still a guide.

To be a good sailor one must get to the bottom of the situation, so I made for a door marked, "The Hold". As luck would have it, I encountered there, none other than the CAPTAIN himself.

Ah . . . What an opportunity to see the works! Let me see . . . how should one obtain the freedom of a ship? The conversation safely maneuvered past weather . . . and speed . . . I proceeded to unfold my plan to the Captain himself.

I liked this captain, notwithstanding the fact (and I was rather dismayed about it) that he was quite normal and did not own steel-grey eyes, bushy eyebrows, or a flaming beard.

Permit To Look About

With no little ceremony he announced he would be delighted to permit me to size up his ship. I was dubbed then and there, "A VOLUNTEER AT SEA". But there was to be no private personal guide!

Questions had to be distributed evenly amongst all personnel . . . from starboard to port, and between fore and aft. There had to be safety at sea the captain explained. There was safety in numbers, he explained.

First I visited the engine room, to investigate the turbines and oil furnace. Scientific terms had to be used to describe this jungle of giant test tubes and pressure gauges. The quiz took a full two hours . . . and after that even my genial guide there was sure I could not find another thing to "what-is-that-for" about.

My gleanings caused me to become rather reckless, and it took a dunking in the brine, via the cold air ventilating system, to sober me.

Next I besieged the Radio room. Semaphores and Morse code, a la girl-guide training, found me rather cockily expounding on the advantages of modern systems of communication.

Why the charming radio operators wanted to know if I were related to Horatio Nelson or Alexander Graham Bell or somebody named Marconi, I don't know.

I even tackled the navigator's bridge. Forbidden territory? Not for this lass.

Just like my geometry set, those instruments were. Only a little shinier, and more polished.

My calculations were rather satisfactory at that, I thought and, mind you, it was a tricky course I mapped.

Awash and Ahoy, Mates

Peering out of the Crow's Nest, I half expected to see a pirate's ship dead ahead. Alas, I saw only the heaving sea. Later I was allowed to use the steering gear for a short three minutes. I demonstrated my knowledge of knots and even used some nautical language. It was all very impressive when I gave the steering gear back to the man. He seemed even more impressed than I was.

Have you ever been inside a refrigeration system? Well, the temperature is against it, but it is really something to see! Of course the electrical plant was quite a shocking surprise. And I still can't see why it should blow a fuse while I was on the inspection committee.

Before we docked, I'd accomplished everything with the exception of the Sailor's Horn Pipe. I reported to the Captain that I had found his ship in order, though I deeply regretted the fact that I hadn't witnessed a burial at sea.

Rumors were that the crew had considered petitioning the captain to announce that all further inquiries concerning their respective duties be made at the purser's office only, and that blue prints would be provided for future Volunteers-at-Sea. Rumors were too that the crew had also considered burying somebody at sea.

I wonder why.



I AM THE  
IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION

OUR CHRISTMAS PRAYER

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to you?  
It is significant that this tremendous feast day comes so close to the birthday of Our Lord. It was Mary who made that birthday possible—who gave us Christ, and Christmas.

Family Now Complete

One more item for rejoicing has been added to us. Eddie, the B, and Miss Mary Omanique, have come home. Our family is again complete.

Great was the chatter, and many the questions. The smallest details of their trips were demanded of them. "What was Fatima like, Eddie?" "B, tell us more about the Holy Father." "Mary, where did you pick up this

relic?"

Eddie made a flying trip. He spent a little more than two weeks in Europe, visiting Portugal, Italy, and France. The B travelled by boat, with Mary. She returned to Canada as soon as possible, after receiving the special blessing of the pope; but she had no time to return to Madonna House, as she had to fill a schedule of lecture appointments. She had been away from us for more than two months, so there was much news for us to "catch up on."

A holy and joyous Christmas, a most happy New Year—and a peaceful and spiritual new life to all the world.

PIUS XII BLESSES F.H.

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With us also at that moment, were all the little ones of Christ, those we have the privilege of serving, the forgotten ones, the have-nots, the poor—multitudes of them. And the Negroes of America were standing in front of all still hungry for justice.

All were there, receiving this FATHERLY BLESSING . . . THIS BLESSING FROM CHRIST'S OWN REPRESENTATIVE . . . THIS BLESSING FILLED WITH SO MUCH LOVE!

My heart began to sing an



And blessed be he who  
gave the manger shape

### Freedom

(Anonymous)

Unevenness no longer troubles me.

Wealth is the same to me as poverty.

Illusion I have cast away, Without myself I long to stay.

Myself I leave, Who lives beyond his thought, he shall not grieve.

You ask how from illusion I withdrew?

When perfect union in myself I knew?

Only that union is not vain That takes the sting from love and pain.

Myself I leave, Who lives beyond his thought, he shall not grieve.

Since I was drowned in depths, nothing could force

My lips to speech, I lost my very tongue.

Thus God into Himself has taken me.

Myself I leave, And in this darkness I no longer grieve.

Since now again my life is at its source,

I cannot age. I am forever young.

The gifts of earth have all forsaken me,

Their powers leave, Who lives beyond his thought, he shall not grieve.



alleluia that will, I think, never end.

The Latin words ceased. I lifted a tear-stained face, arose from my knees. His Holiness touched my head with his hand, then gave me a little holy medal. He bowed and moved on.

I could not move. I thought I never could. But, somehow, I passed through the endless beautiful rooms. Somehow I got down the lovely marble stairs . . . out into the open . . . down the winding hill . . . and back to Rome.

Yet part of me will always remain at the feet of His Holiness . . . in silent gratitude . . . and in an immense love!

### Why Francis Could Not Go To Sleep

(Father Angelo Franco, a Salesian priest now teaching theology in California, spent a month or more at Madonna House last summer, giving Ed. Doherty a wealth of material for his new book, to be called "The Conquering March of Don John Bosco." This is a nice little story Father has written for Mr. Doherty's pleasure. It is given you as a Christmas present. God bless you, and all your relatives and friends.)

This night, when Francis climbed into his bed and adjusted his pillow he found a small slip of paper, nicely folded. It was addressed to him. He could plainly see his name on the outside of it. He opened it and saw the neat handwriting of Don Bosco.

"Francis, suppose you were to die tonight—what would happen to you?"

Yes, Don Bosco had written that note. There was his signature.

"Good heavens," the boy

thought, "what a joke Don Bosco is playing on me."

His heart began to beat fast. It must be a joke. He slipped between the sheets and tried to sleep. Of course it was a joke.

But he could not sleep. He tossed and turned. But whether he turned on his right side, or his left, or tried to lie still on his back, he kept wondering, "suppose I died tonight!"

He got up, dressed hurriedly, left the dormitory on tip toes, and made swiftly for the saint's room. A light was still burning there, and the door had been left ajar—perhaps on purpose. He knocked, timidly, and a sweet voice welcomed him inside.

Falling on his knees at the feet of the priest, Francis begged to go to Confession. Don Bosco smiled, nodded gently, drew the boy closer to him, and bent his head to listen.

After a few minutes Francis had unburdened himself of all his sins—the only burden that really weighs heavily on a soul—and had made his peace with God.

A few words from the saint—and the way he looked when he said, "Good night Francis," . . . filled the boy with happiness. He hurried back to the dorm, and this time he had no trouble trying to go to sleep.

Take the little story from our Christmas tree. It's all your own. What would happen to you—supposing you were to die tonight? Would the Immaculate Mother welcome you in heaven? Would the Christ Child bid you a Merry Christmas?

Ah—and a Happy New Life to you too.

### The Cry Of Hunger

This is a letter recently received from the Rev. Peter Tonello, S.D.B., at Don Bosco Shrine, Catholic Mission, Cherrapunji P.O., Assam, India. It is printed without change.

"At this most critical moment, there is no time for me to weep and pause, but in haste I send you this message. Recent destruction of floods and the continuous famine of rice made my orphans and priests endure much hardships. What rice we get is not at all sufficient; and for this I have to have ready in hand dollars, 60 every two weeks, or else I shall lose the ration, and my orphans will starve. Tide of starvation is mounting higher and higher.

"Added to the present misfortune, one of our girls' schools was half destroyed by the terrible storm, the damage of which cost dollars 750. Sisters, orphans, and boarders suffered terribly during the heaviest monsoon of this wettest place. Their sad plight aches one's heart.

"I do not mind much for myself but what strikes my heart is the hunger of my little ones and the increased poverty of my mission. Please help me, although appeals are showering as floodlights at your door! Let not my orphans eat wild roots of jungles as many of our poorest Christians are doing at this grave period. God will reward you.

"You may send donations here or to my account at the Bank of America, 660 S. Spring St., Los Angeles, California."

## In An Honorable People

By Martin Moscato

(This was intended by the author to honor the feast of the Assumption. It is just as good as a memorial to the feast of the Immaculate Conception.)

O Canada, rejoice, and with you all the peoples of the world — my people of the United States given to the Queen of Heaven, yours devoted in a special manner to Her mother. For She has gone up Home, who chose to become Herself the home of Christ, Our Lord. They make a place for us so that we'll find ourselves in no strange land when we likewise go Home.

### We Are Spiritual Jews

According to the application of the Scripture in the Liturgy for the Assumption, Our Dearest Mother "took root in an honorable people," giving us an undying heritage which we may not easily discard. She was a Jewess by birth. We, as Her children, have not revoked our Jewish ancestry. We have fulfilled it.

Her skin was not the fair shade of the Anglo-Saxon. Rather, I think, it was dark and glowing as the Polish ikon of Czestochowa, as the Mexican 'tilma' of Guadalupe, as the copper cheeks of the Iroquois who would martyr Her sons; and as the little Harlem children who were to undergo another sort of martyrdom in the cruelty of Her white sons, a life-long pain of prejudice.

Her manner and Her speech were not the incisive or suggestive appearances of the Socialite, nor yet the rough ways of the mountain woman; but she had in common with them, all that renders dignity to womanhood.

The problems of the housewife are not strange to Her, nor are those sweeter problems of maternity. She knew a wife's devotion and a widow's loss. She was an immigrant and shared the hard things in an exile's life — cramped quarters, a foreign tongue, and unfamiliar customs. And I have no doubt She also knew the pangs of discrimination.

### No Prejudice Allowed

I warn you. (As Her child I have a right to warn you, my brothers and my sisters) She will not be pleasantly disposed to listen to our prejudice, regardless of its "justification," notwithstanding the direction in which it is aimed.

If we will partake of our inheritance, it is imperative that we guard our character as citizens of Her nation, Her "honorable folk." Our honor lies in deepening within that Union with Her Son

## Your First Communion Veil

"First Communion Day is over," one of our readers writes, "and your veil is packed away. Sometimes it stays packed until Mary, or Jennie, or Marcia, comes rushing from school to tell you, in a breathless voice, that Sister says she is to be confirmed, and she must have a veil."

"In my classroom some of these old veils are used again and again and again, used every day, to honor the blessed Queen of Heaven."

"The name of each girl in my class is written on tickets and the tickets are placed in a box. Every morning two names are drawn from the box, and two girls are given veils."

"What a blessed privilege is theirs! They are permitted to kneel before the shrine in the schoolroom, veiled as Mary herself was, when she lived among us. They have a very special place on a wee kneeling bench, and one row of pupils kneel around them."

"The two girls dedicate themselves to Our Lady for the entire day, and offer all their tasks to her, for the benefit of the most forgotten soul in Purgatory."

"This daily routine takes but a few minutes, but O how Our Lady must love it, and the children who wear the veils in her honor. And how the children love her, once they have been chosen to wear the veil for her!"

that makes us members of Him, consequently members of Her family.

I will go further. Our salvation, and, because She is the Mediatrix of all Grace, the very process by which we shall approach the holiness that is Heaven, all depend on that degree to which we belong to Her own race. It is a race, I tell you, not defined by color or by boundaries; but enclosed within the Mystical Body of Christ.

"Mary, Root of Jesse, who sprang out of the furrow of an honorable race, and blossomed forth a Savior — now in this season when our fields and orchards give their first-fruits, when you also went to God, first-fruit of the Mystic Vine, make our destiny to be to follow you."

"For we are born, not just to pass a little hour here and live as liberated souls; but, whole men, reunited to our flesh, to know the glory that was Eden in a Paradise restored because of you. Amen."



## Thank You, Lord

By Warren J. Largay

(A Thanksgiving poem carried into the Yuletide.)

These days are glorious, O God . . .

The wind stays in the south and warms my back; The while it causes trees to gently curtsy to the north. The grain is shocked, in military style.

The grapes are bunched in blueness on the vine— The trees have changed their dress from green to gold— The meadow lark sings sweet and — high.

The rain falls soft and deep and still upon the breast of mother earth. Rich runs the milk from udders . . .

And fat sheep graze lazily on pleasant pastures.

All this is from Thy hand, O God,

And yet, we who accept Thy bounty as our just due Find it hard to say 'O Lord we thank You!'

As rocks—our "thank you's" linger in our throats.

(The devil is so pleased when we are rude)

Dynamite with Thy grace, this dam, O God,

And let us flood You with our gratitude!



### FIVE ACRE MEDITATIONS

(Continued from Page Two)

and steeples of the evergreens, the brave red plumes of the sumacs, and the unafraid bright glory of the little oaks. Even in the dreariest and coldest woods there are little oaks who warm Me with their splendor!

"Colorful or drab, I shall cover the world with snow. I shall make it white and shiny clean. And, in Mine Own time, I shall make it flame again in the likeness of My Heart."

A young pine had fallen across an old familiar path. Its roots, I saw, had not been very deep. An old tree, a tree that had rotted long ago, while standing straight and tall, had fallen across the sapling — and it had broken several poplars in its fall.

The leaves made a sound like little girls make crumpling cellophane candy wrappers in the darkness of a movie. And a partridge exploded suddenly into the cold sky.

God's children will have plenty of game to eat.



### THE B'S CORNER

(Continued from Page Two)

time to the Apostolate, talked together and prayed together, and talked some more.

And I, mothered both by Europe and North America was often called on to explain, to clarify the differences between the two continents. In straightening out false notions (how many there are), and in imparting some small detail that was missing in the picture of the whole—I realized how homesick I was, and where I belonged.

### Learns About Love

I realized more. Listening to so many and summing up the findings of that extraordinary Congress of the Laity, I understood, at long last, the very heart of the Lay Apostolate of Catholic Action.

IT WAS LOVE. It was the annihilation IN THE SOULS, THE HEARTS, AND MINDS OF MEN of all frontiers . . . all barriers . . . of language, customs, climates, nationalities, and races!

ONLY LOVE COULD DO THAT!

It was not some sort of special, distant, ephemeral love that could be expressed in the words of many tongues. No. It was A LOVE LIVED TO THE FULL BY MEN IN LOVE WITH GOD, AND HENCE, FOR HIS SAKE, LOVING THEIR FELLOW MEN.

It was the LOVE OF THE GOSPELS OF CHRIST, LIVED DAILY . . . UTTERLY . . . WITHOUT ANY COMPROMISE WHAT'S O-EVER.

That was the soul, the heart, the core of THE LAY APOSTOLATE OF CATHOLIC ACTION. The rest was secondary.

To learn to love all men because they are our brothers in Christ, because we all were bought at the price of His Incarnation and Redemption . . . and at the same price were made children of His Father . . . that was the age old secret, found anew at the Congress by all of us.

And now all that had to be done was to go back and share that secret . . . to shout it from the house tops . . . to show it BY OUR LIVES.

It was in meditating on this idea that I knew why I was homesick for Madonna House . . . for Combermere, and for all the rosaries of villages that surround it in my beloved "bush."

In me the old and the new had merged. Through the grace of God, I realized that Europe had let me go, so that I should learn to love better and more . . . both the new and the old.

## Random Thoughts

The more the suffering and the less it appears before men, the more it is to Thine honor and glory.

St. Therese

Confidence in God turns the steepest stairway of life into an escalator.

Father Hemphill, O.S.B.

To lead a quiet, humble, peaceful interior life of personal love with Our Lord, not caring what other people do, think, or say, is the only way of happiness.

Father B. Wilberforce

An ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory.

Anon

My greatest mortification is community life.

St. Bernard

Kindness has converted more people than zeal, eloquence, or learning; and these last have seldom converted anyone unless they were accompanied by kindness.

Father Hemphill, O.S.B.

There are trifles which please Our Lord more than the conquest of the world—a smile or kindly-word for instance, when I feel inclined to say nothing or appear bored.

St. Therese

Wherever a Catholic Sun doth shine There's always laughter and good red wine. At least I've always found it so

Benedicamus Domino.

Anon

It is better to be silent and be thought a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt.

Anon

He that loves little, prays little; he that loves much, prays much.

St. Augustine

An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity.

Anon

To him who does his best, God does not deny grace.

Theological Axiom

Self denial is the measure of our Love.

John Henry Newman

Mortifications are sharp swords that will sever the bonds holding us back from Christ.

Father Hemphill, O.S.B.

Be always gay at recreation.

St. Madleine Sophie

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